

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0619

AMEMBASSY BONN

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION BERLIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PARIS 16498

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, PFOR, FR, GW

SUBJECT: OLIVIER WORMSER, NEW FRENCH AMBASSADOR TO BONN

1. SUMMARY. SENIOR CAREER DIPLOMAT OLIVIER WORMSER, FORMER GOVERNOR OF THE BANK OF FRANCE AND FORMER AMBASSADOR TO USSR, HAS BEEN APPOINTED FRENCH AMBASSADOR TO BONN. ONE OF THE MOST HIGHLY SKILLED FRENCH NEGOTIATORS, WORMSER HAS SPENT MOST OF HIS CAREER IN ECONOMIC AFFAIRS. RELATIONS BETWEEN WORMSER AND GISCARD D'ESTAING HAVE HAD UPS AND DOWNS. FROM BONN WORMSER WILL PROBABLY HAVE MINIMAL INFLUENCE ON FRENCH FOREIGN POLICY. END SUMMARY.

2. OLIVIER WORMSER WAS BORN IN 1913, TOOK DEGREES IN LAW AND POLITICAL SCIENCE AND JOINED THE QUAI IN 1933. HE SERVED IN ROME, RETURNED TO PARIS WHERE HE SERVED SUCCESSIVELY IN THE MINISTRY FOR OVERSEAS DEPENDENCIES (1934), AND THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (1936) AND THEN RESIGNED TO TEACH LAW AT THE UNIVERSITY OF DIJON IN 1938. MOBILIZED IN 1939, HE JOINED THE FRENCH ARMY
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AND LATER SERVED AS A NAVAL AIDE WITH THE FREE FRENCH

FORCES IN 1941. HE WAS CHARGE DE MISSION WITH THE FRENCH COMMITTEE OF NATIONAL LIBERATION IN LONDON IN 1943 AND THEN SERVED AS FIRST SECRETARY IN THE FRENCH EMBASSY IN LONDON. HE RETURNED TO THE QUAI IN 1948 AND BECAME CHIEF OF THE ECONOMIC COOPERATION SECTION (DEALING WITH THE OEEC). IN 1954 HE BECAME QUAI DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS. WHILE STILL IN THAT POSITION HE WAS NAMED A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF THE BANK OF FRANCE (1963). WORMSER WAS APPOINTED AMBASSADOR TO THE USSR IN OCTOBER 1966 AND RETURNED TO PARIS TWO YEARS LATER, WHEN HE BECAME A MEMBER OF A COMMITTEE STUDYING DOMESTIC MONETARY POLICY. IN APRIL 1969, HE WAS NAMED GOVERNOR OF THE BANK OF FRANCE -- A POSITION WHICH UNTIL THEN HAD BEEN RESERVED FOR AN INSPECTEUR DES FINANCES. WORMSER RETAINED THIS POSITION UNTIL JUNE 1974, WHEN HE WAS REPLACED BY BERNARD CLAPPIER.

3. WORMSER THUS HAS AN EXTREMELY STRONG BACKGROUND IN ECONOMICS. AS A CAREER DIPLOMAT, WORMSER HAS PROVED WILLING TO RESPECT THE TIGHT CONTROL OVER FOREIGN ECONOMIC POLICY FORMULATION WHICH THE ELYSEE HAS MAINTAINED THROUGHOUT THE FIFTH REPUBLIC. HE IS NOTED FOR HIS INTENSE DEVOTION TO WHAT HE CONCEIVES TO BE FRENCH NATIONAL INTEREST. HE RARELY, IF EVER, ALLOWS PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS OR ALTRUISTIC CONSIDERATIONS TO INTERFERE WITH HIS PURSUIT OF OFFICIAL, NATIONAL OBJECTIVES.

4. ONE OF THE MOST HIGHLY SKILLED NEGOTIATORS AVAILABLE TO THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT, HE IS OFTEN DESCRIBED AS TOUGH, AGILE AND PERSISTENT -- AND, ON OCCASION, RUTHLESS. HE BELONGS TO THE VELVET-GLOVE-AND-STILETTO SCHOOL. HIS ARGUMENTS ARE WELL-PREPARED AND USUALLY BACKED BY SOUND LOGIC. HIS NEGOTIATING EXPERIENCE HAS BEEN BROAD AND VARIED, RANGING FROM THE ILL-FATED ATTEMPT TO FORM A EUROPEAN FREE TRADE AREA IN THE LATE 1950'S TO THE FRANCO-ALGERIAN PETROLEUM SETTLEMENT. AMERICAN REPRESENTATIVES HAVE SOMETIMES FOUND THEMSELVES ALLIED WITH HIM IN VARIOUS INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC NEGOTIATIONS, IN WHICH CASES HE HAS SHOWN HIMSELF TO BE CONFIDENTIAL

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A POWERFUL AND EFFECTIVE PARTNER.

5. AMONG THE FRENCH OFFICIALS WHO HAVE BEEN INFLUENTIAL IN WORMSER'S CAREER ARE FORMER PRIME MINISTER COUVE DE MURVILLE, GISCARD D'ESTAING, AND BERNARD CLAPPIER. WORMSER IS A DISCIPLE OF COUVE DE MURVILLE, AND HAS EVEN BEEN REFERRED TO AS A JUNIOR-GRADE COUVE. COUVE WAS LARGELY RESPONSIBLE FOR WORMSER'S APPOINT-

MENT AS GOVERNOR OF THE BANK OF FRANCE. THROUGHOUT MOST OF COUVE'S LONG TENURE AS FOREIGN MINISTER (1958-68), WORMSER OCCUPIED A KEY SPOT IN THE FOREIGN OFFICE AND SERVED COUVE FAITHFULLY IN MANY DIFFICULT AND DELICATE NEGOTIATIONS. SPECULATION IN PARIS AT THAT TIME WAS THAT COUVE WAS DISSATISFIED WITH THE ROLE THAT

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THE BANK OF FRANCE WAS PLAYING IN THE PERIOD LEADING UP TO THE MONETARY CRISIS IN 1968 AND THAT "HIS MAN," WORMSER, WAS THE MOST FIT TO TAKE OVER THE POSITION.

6. WORMSER'S RELATIONSHIP WITH GISCARD HAS HAD ITS UPS AND DOWNS. HE HAS MADE IT CLEAR ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS IN HIS CONVERSATIONS THAT HE WAS IN FUNDAMENTAL DISAGREEMENT WITH GISCARD ON IMPORTANT ISSUES. IN EARLY 1972 WORMSER WAS SAID TO HAVE BEEN OFFERED THE POST OF AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED STATES. THIS HAS BEEN INTERPRETED AS A MANEUVER BY GISCARD TO GET WORMSER OUT OF

THE BANK OF FRANCE. WORMSER APPARENTLY DECLINED THE APPOINTMENT ON GROUNDS THAT FAMILY CONSIDERATIONS REQUIRED HIM TO STAY IN PARIS. IN SEPTEMBER 1972, THE TWO MEN AGAIN DISAGREED OVER THE GROUP OF TWENTY. AT THAT TIME IT WAS PREDICTED THAT WORMSER'S DAYS AT THE BANK WERE NUMBERED. HOWEVER, AN UNEASY TRUCE PREVAILED BETWEEN THE TWO MEN UNTIL POMPIDOU'S DEATH. THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT GISCARD AS PRESIDENT DECIDED TO TAKE
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AWAY THE GOVERNORSHIP FROM WORMSER. IN MAY 1974, WORMSER PUBLICLY CRITICIZED THE ECONOMIC POLICY OF THE GOF, IN WHICH GISCARD WAS ACTIVELY INVOLVED, EXPRESSING DOUBT THAT POLICIES OF EXPANSION AND PRICE STABILITY CAN BE FOLLOWED SIMULTANEOUSLY. THERE IS GOOD REASON TO BELIEVE THAT GISCARD'S MOVE WAS IN REACTION TO THESE CRITICISMS.

7. WORMSER'S RELATIONSHIP WITH BERNARD CLAPPIER, HIS SUCCESSOR AS GOVERNOR TO THE BANK OF FRANCE, CAN BE DESCRIBED AS AMICABLE. THE TWO MEN CORRESPONDED FREQUENTLY WHILE WORMSER WAS IN MOSCOW.

8. ALTHOUGH WORMSER HAS BEEN AN EFFECTIVE ALLY OF THE UNITED STATES IN VARIOUS INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATIONS, HE HAS PROVED TO BE AN EQUALLY REDOUBTABLE OPPONENT IN SITUATIONS WHERE OUR INTERESTS WERE OPPOSED. HE HAS A GAULLIST WORLD VIEW AND CONCEPTION OF FRANCE'S ROLE, AND IS ALMOST INVARIABLY CRITICAL OF US POLICIES. AN EXAMPLE WAS HIS ROLE IN THE 1962 NEGOTIATIONS ON THE KENNEDY ROUND

9. WORMSER IS USUALLY WELL INFORMED ON MOST FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES. HE IS EXTREMELY WELL INFORMED ON MATTERS FOR WHICH HE IS RESPONSIBLE. HE IS WELL VERSED IN INTERNATIONAL MONETARY AFFAIRS AND A RUEFFIANIAN IN ECONOMIC PHILOSOPHICAL OUTLOOK (I.E. HE HAS AN UNCOMPROMISING COMMITMENT TO A POLICY OF PRICE STABILITY, EVEN AT THE EXPENSE OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND FULL EMPLOYMENT). HE IS A GAULLIST BY CONVICTION, ALTHOUGH IN THE PAST HE WAS CONSIDERED AS SYMPATHETIC TO THE LEFT WING OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY. WORMSER IS DEVOTED TO HIS WORK AND IS KNOWN FOR WORKING LONG HOURS. HE IS NOT PUT OFF BY PROBLEMATIC OR UNPLEASANT TASKS, BUT USUALLY FEELS CHALLENGED BY THEM. ALTHOUGH SOME US OFFICIALS HAVE FOUND WORMSER TO BE COLD, FORMAL, CYNICAL AND ALOOF IN BOTH SOCIAL AND BUSINESS SITUATIONS, OTHERS HAVE FOUND HIM POLITE AND FRIENDLY AT THE PERSONAL LEVEL. WORMSER SPEAKS FLAWLESS ENGLISH.

10. WORMSER HAS BEEN MARRIED SINCE 1946 TO THE FORMER
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SIMONE COLOMB. MADAME WORMSER DID GRADUATE WORK AT
LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY, WHERE SHE WROTE A DOCTORAL
THESIS ON THE AMERICAN PAINTER JAMES MCNEILL WHISTLER.

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SHE LATER WROTE A BOOK ON ENGLISH ART WHICH WAS PUBLISHED
IN FRANCE IN 1948. SHE IS AN ATTRACTIVE, CHARMING
WOMAN AND SPEAKS EXCELLENT ENGLISH. THE
WORMSERS HAVE TWO ADOPTED CHILDREN.

11. IT IS NOT KNOWN TO WHAT EXTENT WORMSER WILL HAVE
A VOICE IN FRENCH POLICY FROM HIS POST IN BONN BUT IT

IS LIKELY THAT HIS INFLUENCE WILL BE EXTREMELY LIMITED.
TO THE EXTENT THAT HE HAS INFLUENCE IN DEVELOPMENT OF
THE FRENCH POSITION IN THE TRADE NEGOTIATIONS, IT WILL
BE EXERTED ON BEHALF OF POSITIONS THAT ARE UNHELPFUL
TO US. HE WAS A DIFFICULT ADVERSARY DURING THE KENNEDY
ROUND WHEN HE WAS QUAI ECONOMIC DIRECTOR AND HIS VIEWS
HAVE NOT CHANGED. HE WILL BE OPPOSED TO A SUBSTANTIAL
TARIFF CUT AND TO THE ACROSS-THE-BOARD FORMULA FOR
TARIFF CUTS. HE WILL ALSO BE OPPOSED TO SIGNIFICANT
LIBERALIZATION OF TRADE IN AGRICULTURE. ON BROADER
QUESTIONS, HE CANNOT BE COUNTED ON TO PUSH FOR OUTWARD-
LOOKING ATLANTIC-MINDED POLICIES ON THE PART OF THE
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COMMUNITY, AND THIS MAY WELL BRING HIM INTO CONFLICT
WITH THE GERMANS.
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